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Leadership Transition and Long Term Ministry Sustainability

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**Thornston Educational Fund
Board of Directors**

October 24, 2015

**Leadership Transition and
Long Term Ministry Sustainability**

It is a special privilege to be with you tonight. For many years, Judy and I have ^{Administered} ~~respected~~ the ministry of Ken and Jan Wendling. Phil and Doug, it is good to see you again and I also appreciated meeting other members of the Board.

(Here give them a brief history of Harbor House.)

My charge tonight comes from Ken's letter to me
on the subject ~~the long term~~ ministry
asking me to specifically touch ~~the~~ ^{See this clearly of}
~~sustainability~~ ^{See} during a ^{Orcl} time of leadership transition.

One thing certain about tomorrow, it is going to be
different than today. As we talk about the future and a
subject like sustainability and leadership transition, we
would all agree, and we know, that we serve a God
whose promises do not change
who knows the future and ^{who} has a way for us to follow.

Proverbs 19:21 reminds us "that many are the
plans in a man's heart but it is the Lord's purpose that
prevails." ⁴⁰ 30/40 years ago, who could have seen or
been able to project the growth of Christianity that we
see ^{today} in China. Thank you for people like you, Ken
and your wife Jan, who were there with a vision and
for the people of Chenai.

sowing the seeds for God to work in this country.

There is Another verse about planning for the future that I often refer to is in Proverbs 16:33, "We toss the coin but it is the Lord who controls the decision."

As we seek God's will in planning for the future, he provides the opportunity for us to toss the coin. Or, as C. S. Lewis said it, "God seems to do nothing by himself that he can otherwise delegate to those he created."

the
~~Heavenly~~ *Thornston Education* *includes*
As Ken has shared with me, ~~this work~~ now involves Chinese Boards as well as a ^{local} staff of over 200 and almost 700 active lay leaders, who are doing ~~good~~ ^{the great} work in education and ministry with over 60,000 parents and children in China. ^{PT} As the ministry has grown to this size ^{and includes} ~~with~~ local governance, how best can you influence,

she And *expectation of the ministry*
nurture and support leadership ~~transition~~ for the future.

Does your focus and purpose as the U.S. arm of the
ministry change?

There are three ~~more~~ *suggest* questions I ~~pose~~ *consider* for you to

As you think about ~~in~~ responding to the opportunity before ~~and you~~
And how
it should be
done
for the
ministry
you. ~~Who runs this organization?~~ *will own it* Who ~~owns this~~
will run it ~~organization?~~ *will be responsible for it* Who is responsible for this organization?

Seldom Boards cannot effectively run organizations, ~~only~~ *but* the right
the ones who are ultimately leaders can – Boards, however, are responsible to the
owners of the organization – And who is the owner --

As Psalms 24 reminds us, God is the owner.

Lord Some thoughts on leadership. *Drucker* has said
that leadership, in and of itself, is not something that
should be sought after. Leadership, he ~~says~~ *suggests*, is just a

means; to what end is the real question. The end of leadership for Drucker involves the people who follow

and the direction they are headed. ~~and how they are benefited~~
and who they were becoming

This was the point that Jesus was trying to make ^{to his} ~~decepted~~ that night he was betrayed when he took a towel and a basin of water and washed his disciples' feet. These

were His disciples. ~~In the future they would be called~~

Apostles. They were to build His church. He would no

longer be physically present, His presence would be in the spirit. Their focus had to be on the people ^{they would build} ~~that would~~

followed and who they were becoming. It was not ^{preceding that designated title} ~~or Apostle~~ about them or the titles they would receive. It was all

about the people that followed.

Today we often call this servant leadership.
Servant leadership has been and should be ^{continue to} an essential
for the future ~~on the~~ leadership of this ministry.

Now as to the responsibility of the Board, I would
like to summarize some of my Board experiences as
they relate to the issues of transition and leadership

succession. ^{- Board don't really have to make}
^{decision - Selection of the leader}
^{My various Board} My ~~various~~ experiences ^{have reflected} ~~were~~ ^{included} on both for profit and

non-for-profit Boards. I ^{have} was involved in 12 ^{different} such ^{leadership}
succession periods ^{Selection} (appointing new people to lead,
seeking orderly succession and planning for the future.)

^{In} Three of those ^{Selections the leadership choices turned out to be} choices turned out to be failures. In the ^{the short}
^{failures} failures, the damage done to the mission or ministry of

the organization was not just that we chose the wrong

under
person but that we did not act fast enough to remove him.

however have been
The good examples ~~was~~ were very satisfying. Let me share two of them with you. One is Wheaton College where we sit this evening. There is a special history of succession and leadership transition here at Wheaton. The College is 155 years old and during that time there have been only eight Presidents.

I have had the opportunity of working with four of them and being involved as a Board member in *see* *Selection of R* *choosing three.* ~~choosing~~ *Presidents* Six out of the eight had a proven track record with the Board before they were chosen. For the two that did not, they had to be actively recruited

had one thing in common they

In fact they were very successful in the ~~their~~ leadership ~~responsibilities~~ ^{I only need} ~~responsibilities~~ ^{they were performing}

by the Board. They were not just looking for a job. In both cases, the process took over a year's time.

The second organization is the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. It has been in existence now for over 50 years and during that time we have had one succession and leadership transition from Billy to his son Franklin.

I have served on the Board of the BGEA for 30 years and for 20 of those years I served as Chairman of the Executive Committee.

When I ^{first} came on the Board, a plan had already been developed by the Board for the ~~organization~~ ^{BGEA} when Billy would no longer be able to continue in the ministry. The organization and its ministry was so

closely identified with God's hand on Billy and his team
it was determined that if he was no longer able to
continue, the life of the organization should also be
concluded. A special fund had been established for the
payment of benefits to employees at the time of such a
conclusion.

When Billy moved into his 80's his health began to
limit his travel and his preaching. His doctors felt that
he may be suffering from ^{the} an onset of Parkinson's
disease. ~~This was once later determined not to be~~
~~correct~~

*Dinnering
this period*

*who were members
of the Board*
Several of us had a private meeting with Billy and
suggested that maybe this was time for us to start
seriously considering how to conclude the organization
and his ministry. I can remember that meeting very

clearly. Billy listened to us very carefully and then he
looked ~~at us~~ ^{in his eyes} and said, "Gentlemen, when that time
comes it will be up to me and the Lord." The

conversation was over. Six months later Billy came to
the Board and said he had been ~~diligent~~ ^{diligently} by praying

about this issue and felt that it was God's will and God's
way that ~~the BGEA should continue to preach the~~ ^{in an unglorified effect}

Gospel. It may not be me ^{who does the preaching} he said and ~~it may not be~~ ^{nor may it be}

the way we have done it in the past, but we should not
take these resources and the people who faithfully
served and given to this ministry and conclude the
preaching of the Gospel. He then recommended that
we consider his son Franklin as the next CEO of the
BGEA.

There followed an extensive period of discussion
and timely ~~prayer~~ ^{at the conclusion of our time of prayer} by the Board. Not all Board members
agreed that Franklin should be the successor. He was
already serving as the leader of Samaritan's Purse. It
was now larger than the BGEA and was involved in
serving the needy in many difficult areas of the world.
~~and it was proposed that he would serve as leader of~~ ^{Could he effectively serve as the}
~~both organizations.~~ ^{Because there was disagreement among the Board} We ^{decided} agreed to postpone the
decision and pray about it over the next six months.

When we met again we were able to reach a
decision to proceed with Franklin. As we did so, Billy
made it clear to me that I had a role to play during this
time of transition in helping to guide it and make it as
smooth as possible. He put it this way, ^{Bill} Bill I want you

to bridge the gaps and to make bridges of harmony
when there is conflict ^{with} ~~with~~ always a spiritual
perspective and point of view. ^{all} As I reflected on his
words I realized they were descriptive of one of his
great strengths of leadership. To be able to engage
difference and bring unity of purpose in seeking to ^{we all agreed}
serve the Lord we all ^{loved each other & focused on what we were about to} ~~love~~ in proclaiming the Gospel of
Jesus Christ. As I look back now I can see how God
was in this decision. Franklin is different than his
father. He sometimes is more controversial in what he
says but he is committed to continue to preach the
Gospel.

When Billy concluded his active ministry of
preaching the Gospel, ^{Franklin} ~~there were~~ over four and ^{and} ~~one~~
^{the records should have had}
^{been over 4 1/2 million -}

a half million decisions for Christ as a result of his ministry. Since that time, there have been more than ^{additional} 15 million decisions for Christ and ~~Billy has seldom left North Carolina.~~

Franklin continued the ministry ^{of} holding public crusades and festivals in the U.S., Canada, Far East, South America and Europe. He also initiated a process of having the best of Billy Graham ^{sermons} lip-synced into over 40 different languages so that it could be aired over TV. ^{in many, different international locations.} He then initiated the development of the My Hope ministry which would be an evangelistic ministry based out of the local church, with members of the church inviting their neighbors into their home to listen to the best of Billy Graham in their own language. This has

been done now in over 45 foreign countries with a *overwhelming*

~~great~~ *He has to do so* response. ~~And then he~~ initiated our online

internet program that is spreading the good news of

the Gospel worldwide. These new methods ~~of~~ *supported by*
the changing world of

~~technology have been added but God's words and~~
allowed the presence of Billy to share
~~message are the same.~~ *the good news of the Gospel*
is not without ever leaving U.S.,
the person

Remember We toss the coin but it is God that controls the

decision. Thank you, Ken, for the foundations you have

laid. Thank you Board members. You have come to

this time with a seriousness of purpose and a desire to

know God's will. It is a time of opportunity ~~because of~~
there will be change - there is a coin to be
~~your past leadership Ken.~~ *will be a coin to toss*
tossed - may God's will be done

An old man, going a lone highway,
came at the evening, cold and gray,
to a chasm vast and deep and wide;
through which was flowing a sullen tide.
The old man crossed in the twilight dim,
the sullen stream had no fear for him;
but he turned when safe on the other side
and built a bridge to span the tide.
"Old man," said a fellow pilgrim near,
"you are wasting your strength with building here;
your journey will end with the ending day,
you never again will pass this way;
you've crossed the chasm deep and wide;
why build you this bridge at evening tide?"
The builder lifted his old gray head—
"good friend, in the path I have come," he said,
"there followeth after me today,
a youth whose feet must pass this way;
this chasm that has been naught to me
to that fair-haired youth may a pitfall be;
he, too, must cross in the twilight dim—
good friend, I am building this bridge for him."

*Through your giving Ken + Jane
15 for Henry
such good
bridge love*